

Meet the State's
'Cactus Cop'

Prescott's
Big Breakfast

Shangri-La
at Oak Creek

Q&A: D'Backs'
Conor Jackson

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

MAY 2008

sedona

The Ultimate Guide to Red Rock Country

Featuring: Hiking, Biking, Fishing, Dining & More

PLUS:

What Exactly
Is a **Vortex**, Anyway?

Features

14 Sedona Side Trips

Here's the thing about Sedona: All you have to do is drive through to be blown away. That's not advisable, though. There are too many opportunities off the beaten path. Hiking, biking, fishing, fine dining ... these are just some of the reasons to park the car.

BY KELLY KRAMER

20 Portfolio: Seeing Red

The double-decker buses in London, the square in Moscow, the Coke can, Bonnie Raitt's hair, the little girl who was chased by the Big Bad Wolf ... a lot of icons in this world are red, but few can compare to the rocks in Sedona. In this month's portfolio, we'll give you a better look at Arizona's second natural wonder. If you think you've seen Sedona, think again.

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Sedona is a mountain-biking mecca — one of the best in the world. For some hard-core riders, it even outranks Moab. Although our writer leans more toward timid, we sent her out anyway. With a group of extremists, nonetheless.

BY LORI K. BAKER

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Even in Sedona, it's hard to get a straight answer on what a vortex is. However, most New Age disciples will tell you it's a place with increased energy that amplifies whatever you take into it. That's what they say. Is there something to it, or are these people just nuts?

BY JACKIE DISHNER

40 Prehistory Lesson

Although New Age gets most of the attention in Sedona, there's an Old Age that's worth learning about, too. The people are known as Sinagua, and their ancient cliff dwellings are just a dirt road away.

BY SCOTT THYBONY

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online arizonahighways.com

No matter what you decide to do in Sedona, chances are at some point you're going to get hungry. At arizonahighways.com, you'll get the lowdown on a few of our favorite Sedona restaurants, along with information about Hopi pottery artists and our online trip planner.

WEEKEND GETAWAY Nestled in the hills of Southern Arizona, Patagonia Lake is a fishing and camping paradise.

DISCOVER ARIZONA Plan a trip with our calendar of events.

Photographic Prints Available

■ Prints of some photographs in this issue are available for purchase, as designated in captions. To order, call 866-962-1191 or visit arizonahighwaysprints.com.

THE DARK SIDE Rays from the setting sun burst from beyond Capitol Butte and darken Mitten Ridge's eastern face in the Coconino National Forest near Sedona. Photograph by Larry Lindahl
■ To order a print of this photograph, see information above.

FRONT COVER Sunset light and a clearing storm double the dramatic impact of Cathedral Rock's reflection in Oak Creek at Red Rock Crossing. Photograph by Robert McDonald
■ To order a print of this photograph, see information above.

BACK COVER Beginning near A.D. 600, the Southern Sinagua people, followed by the Yavapai and Apache people around A.D. 1400, lived and left their pictographic marks in the Red Canyon area of the Coconino National Forest. Photograph by Larry Lindahl
■ To order a print of this photograph, see information above.



JEFF KIDA

BELL ROCK GETS A LOT of attention. It's one of the first things people see when they roll into Sedona, and everybody stops. "Stand over there, little Johnny, and let me take your picture." Like El Capitan and Old Faithful, Bell Rock finds its way into a lot of photo albums, and rightfully so — it's a photogenic landmark in a land blessed with photogenic landmarks.

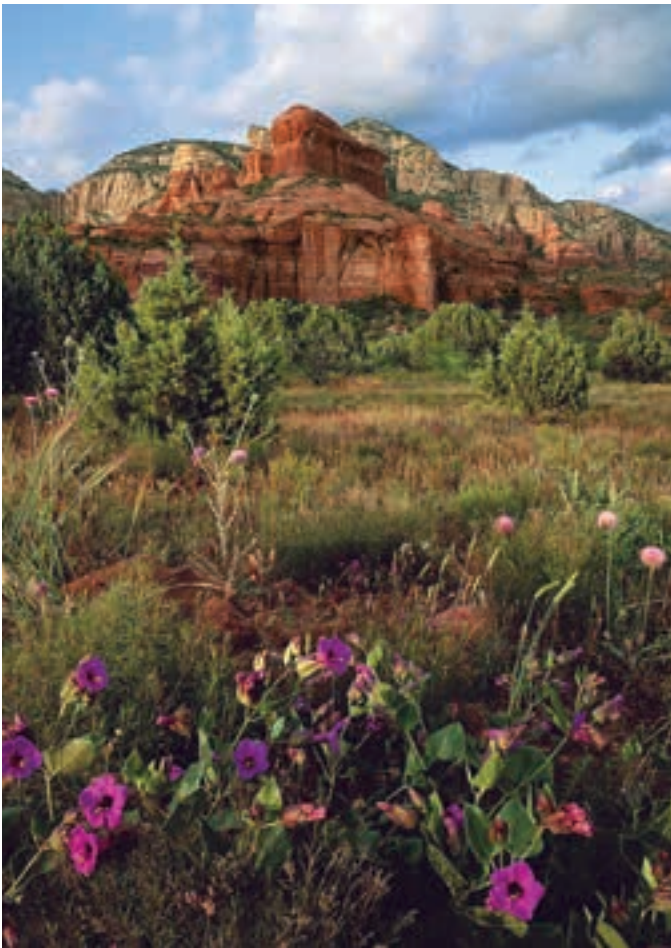
Cathedral Rock, Steamboat Rock, Chimney Rock ... it doesn't take long to fill a digital camera in this neck of the woods. Still, driving through Sedona, bumper-to-bumper with RVs the size of New Jersey, you can't help but wonder what it was like before the invention of the internal combustion engine. Turns out, you can still experience that Sedona, the one Native Americans and pioneers experienced, but you'll have to veer off the beaten path and park the car. It takes some effort, but it's worth it. Of course, if you prefer pink Jeeps to red rocks, all you have to do is sit back and enjoy the ride.

In this month's issue, we'll tell you about both sides of Sedona — the man-made alternatives and Mother Nature's handiwork. For starters, there's our feature titled *Sedona Side Trips*. In it, writer Kelly Kramer spotlights 10 of the best things to do in and around the state's second natural wonder, including hiking, biking, fishing and fine dining. There are helicopter tours, too, as well as spa treatments in Boynton Canyon, one of the best places in the world for a sunset hike. And then there's the Center for the New Age, which is where you'll find clairvoyants, clairsentients and clairaudients. These are just some of the practitioners at the center who will help you harness your spiritual energy through chakra-balancing and aura-cleansing. They also lead guided tours into the area's vortexes.

If you don't know what any of this means, you're not alone. The New Age world is uncharted territory for most people. That's why we sent Jackie Dishner to Sedona to find an answer to a single question: What exactly is a vortex, anyway? In *A Force to Be Reckoned With?*, she shares what she learns.

Although it might seem like a simple assignment, finding an answer took some effort. Among other things, Jackie had to "experience" all six of Sedona's known vortex sites. She also

Sedona's landscapes are among the most beautiful in the world. If you don't believe that, just look at our portfolio on page 20.



ROBERT McDONALD

endured a few rounds of chakra-balancing and aura-cleansing, all of which were intended to open her heart, mind and soul to the spiritual nature of the journey. "If it sounds ambitious," she writes, "it was. This was the trip that taught me to see with my eyes closed."

You'll have to read her story to find her answer, but even then, you might have a hard time getting your arms around it. That's when you switch from new to old. Despite the intrigue of Sedona's New Age culture, its Old Age culture is worth exploring too. And it's relatively easy.

As Scott Thybony writes in *Prehistory Lesson*: "Just west of Sedona ... where paved roads turn to dirt, you'll find traces of people who managed to thrive centuries ago in the dry uplands. They left behind stone walls and archaic images painted in the shelter of overhanging cliffs. Two of the best-preserved sites are the remarkable cliff houses of Honanki and nearby Palatki."

For our story, Scott explored Honanki, which contains a warren of rooms last occupied by Pueblo Indians 700 years ago. If you've never been to one of Arizona's ancient ruins, this story, which features some incredible photography by Larry Lindahl, is going to light a fire. Although you won't be alone — Honanki gets about 35,000 visitors annually, compared to the 4 million people who converge on Bell Rock every year — you'll feel like you're in the middle of nowhere.

More importantly, if you're looking for a taste of what Sedona was like before the invention of the internal combustion engine, this is it. As you'll see, the surrounding landscape is filled with landmarks worthy of a place in your photo album. Even without the requisite shot of little Johnny.

— Robert Stieve
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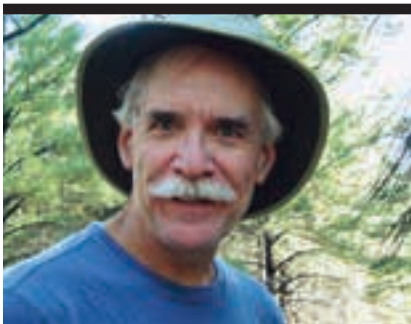
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CONTRIBUTORS



LORI K. BAKER

"There are no soft landings in mountain biking," says Lori K. Baker of her harrowing first try at the sport (see *Along for the Ride*, page 30). But as a freelance writer who's flung herself down ski slopes, piloted stubborn sled dogs, and dangled from trees for *Arizona Highways* stories, she was ready to conquer her fear. "Outdoor wilderness sports are a great exercise for self-empowerment," Baker says. This story only reinforced that notion. Not only was she out of her element, she was out with a group of extremists. Now that she's back and the bruises have healed, she's "more willing to take risks" in other areas of her life. A Mesa native, Baker has also written for *Family Circle*, *Ladies' Home Journal*, *Parenting*, *Child* and *McCall's*.



TOM BEAN

Cameras and mountain bikes do not mix, Tom Bean learned while photographing *Along for the Ride* (page 30). "A mountain bike isn't a great platform to carry tripods," Bean notes. "The only way to do it is in a heavy backpack, which doesn't give you the best posture." Nevertheless, Bean and his equipment survived Sedona's rocky terrain (mostly) unscathed. Trained as a wildlife biologist, Bean didn't even own a camera when he started working as a national park ranger. After teaching himself photography, he got his first professional job taking photos of the Grand Canyon. Since then, he's contributed to *National Geographic Traveler*, *Audubon* and several Smithsonian books.



SCOTT THYBONY

Scott Thybony says he's always found a resonance with traditional peoples (see *Prehistory Lesson*, page 40). "I respect people who sacrifice material well-being for other values," says Thybony, who's lived with Arctic Inuits and herded sheep for a Navajo medicine man. Exploring the ruins around Sedona, he was struck by the "overlapping of various chapters of history and prehistory" — from 12,000-year-old Clovis hunters to ancient Yavapai cultures. The author of dozens of books, Thybony has also written for *National Geographic*, *Smithsonian* and *Outside*. Despite winning prestigious literary awards, he takes special pride in his Colorado River Jerry-Rigging Award for fixing a broken motor with beer cans and driftwood.



LARRY LINDAHL

While photographing *Prehistory Lesson* (page 40), Larry Lindahl got firsthand experience as an ancient Sinaguan. Well, sort of. Lindahl volunteered to help stabilize the Honanki ruin, the largest Sinagua dwelling in Sedona. He gathered precisely fitting sandstone slabs, then hauled 5-gallon buckets filled with earth and water to make mud "cement." "We noticed in gathering the heavy stones that we mysteriously felt a sixth sense telling us when a stone was going to fit without measuring it," he says. "It connected us to the past in a very tangible way." A frequent contributor to *Arizona Highways*, Lindahl also contributes to *Outdoor Photographer*, *Discovery Channel* and *Everyday With Rachel Ray*.



Great Lake, Great Article

I'd like to congratulate you and Lawrence Cheek on your article on Lake Powell [*Reflecting on the Water*, February 2008]. I'm a subscriber, I live at Lake Powell, and it's so refreshing to see such a fair and balanced article about the lake that puts it and its debated origins into proper perspective. Gary Ladd's pictures are wonderful, as usual. Thanks again for such an insightful article.

Dan Scannell, Page

Dam Liar

I've lived most of my life in New York state, and I've read your magazine for as long as I can remember. In 1995, I finally had a chance to see some of the beauty you feature when my World War II Army unit had a reunion in Salt Lake City. We flew out, and when the reunion ended, we got a rental car. First stop was Zion, then Bryce Canyon, and then Page, where we stayed two nights. We visited Glen Canyon Dam and took the five-hour boat ride to Rainbow Bridge. You should be aware that the boat captain told us the entire lake was in the state of Utah, including the dam. I'd believed him until your current issue [February 2008] arrived with different information.

Richard Scroxtan, Liverpool, New York

Lake Effect

I commend you for your wonderful articles and photos of Lake Powell. I started enjoying this wonderful lake in the late '70s and followed its rise to full level. Every year was a new adventure as the shoreline changed, and I always felt that all of the boaters and visitors were experiencing a true wonder. Early on, environmentalists were broadcasting the "travesty" of Lake Powell. I felt the important aspect and benefit of the lake was that most of the hundreds of thousands of visitors over the years would never have the time or ability to explore this backcountry beauty without the development of the lake. I was gratified to see the reluctant but supportive comment at the end of *Reflecting on the Water* [February 2008]: "I'm in one of the most beautiful

places on Earth, and no longer appalled!" Maybe it's too bad that Lawrence Cheek wasted so many years waiting.

Roger Giles, Knoxville, Tennessee

Thanks for the Memories

While it's good to hear that fine dining has come to Williams, please don't knock a place like Rod's Steak House [*The Journal*, February 2008]. Forty-one years ago, on our way to the Grand Canyon for our honeymoon, my husband and I stopped in Williams to eat our wedding dinner at Rod's Steak House. It was a good meal, and as we were on our way out, an older gentleman, dressed in a dirty white cowboy shirt and jeans, a bottle of whiskey in one hand and some cigars in the other, stopped us and inquired, "Son, is that decorated Volkswagen bug out there yer car?" My husband hesitantly replied, "Yes." Well, the gentleman said, "My name is Rod, and I'd like to buy you and yer pretty bride a drink." He ushered us back to a table in the dining room and did just that. It's one of the nicest memories we have, and every year, on our anniversary, we raise a wee glass and toast Rod.

Susan Hunnicutt, Fayetteville, Arkansas

EDITOR'S NOTE: *What a wonderful story, Ms. Hunnicutt. Thank you for sharing. Rod's is indeed a classic. Our intent was not to be critical of Rod's, but rather point out that Williams has expanded beyond just steakhouses. It's great to have options. Happy anniversary.*

Map Quest

As I do every month, I'm enjoying the January 2008 issue of *Arizona Highways*.

I have one tiny complaint: Why is the little map of Arizona with points designating the current articles no longer in the magazine? I always looked at that to see what articles I wanted to read first, and where they were located. Fifteen years ago, a friend and I worked out of Winslow for six weeks on the Navajo Reservation, leading summer Bible schools. It's one of the high points of my life. I love Northern Arizona and its native people. Anyway, see what you can do about that map, and thanks for the world's best state magazine!

Margo Cooke, Anderson, South Carolina

EDITOR'S NOTE: *We've missed it too, Ms. Cooke, so we're bringing it back next month.*

High Water Mark

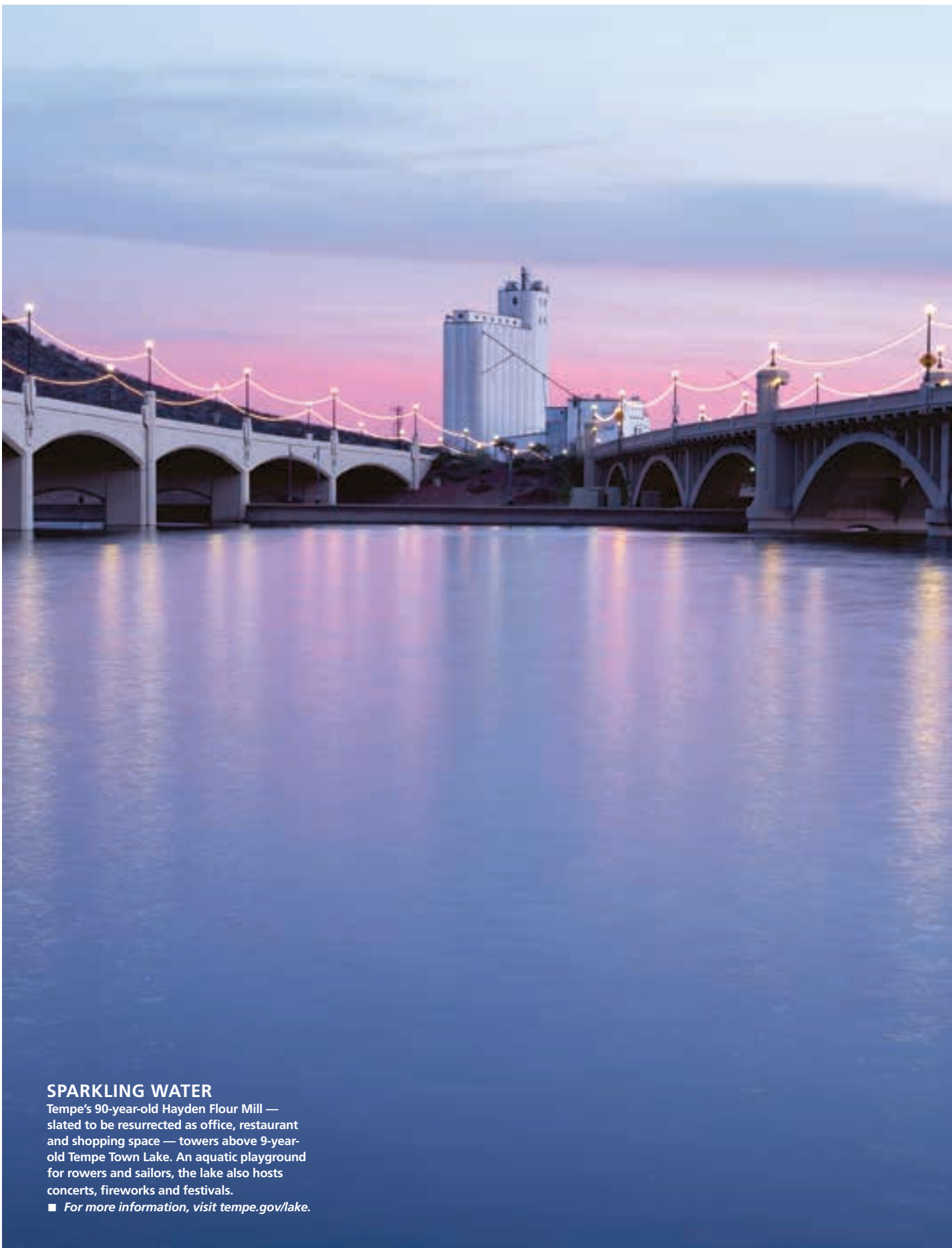
I don't know what changes you made recently, but the magazine that featured Lake Powell [February 2008] was the best issue in a couple of years. Finally, someone there gets it and made an issue about the beautiful Arizona landscapes. If you'll bring back the destination articles, I'll start buying this magazine again. Keep up the good work.

Eric Evans, Phoenix

Sister Bourne's Last Dance

Regarding the article about Beaver Creek [*Beaver Creek Country*, January 2008], your readers might like to know more "stories of days gone by," as your writer so aptly puts it. In Eulalia "Sister" Bourne's book *Ranch Schoolteacher* [University of Arizona Press, 1974], she tells the heartwarming story of her sojourn as the teacher in a one-room school in Beaver Creek from 1914 to 1916. She describes her time there as the most treasured of all the places she lived and taught. Unfortunately, she was fired from her cherished job because she had danced the one-step at a birthday party at Back's Ranch.

Shirley Tribolet, Tucson



SPARKLING WATER

Tempe's 90-year-old Hayden Flour Mill — slated to be resurrected as office, restaurant and shopping space — towers above 9-year-old Tempe Town Lake. An aquatic playground for rowers and sailors, the lake also hosts concerts, fireworks and festivals.

■ For more information, visit tempe.gov/lake.

JEFF SNYDER



JEFF KIDA

PEOPLE

Cactus Cop

Jim McGinnis has a lot of job responsibilities, but protecting saguaros from poachers might be the most important.

SUNLIGHT CREPT ACROSS the hushed, deserted wilderness near Agua Fria National Monument when seven men poured out of a pickup. They strapped a homemade “cradle” to a saguaro, shoveled around its base, wrapped a chain around the root, and ripped it from the ground.

Concealed behind a tree and filming as they extricated 16 more was Jim McGinnis, who pursued the thieves and arrested the driver. The company the men worked for was fined \$58,000.

Officially, McGinnis is a special investigations supervisor for the Arizona Department of Agriculture; unofficially, he’s the state’s first certified “cactus cop.”

McGinnis joined the ADA in 1979 as a border plant inspector, eventually going through the police academy to become a peace officer enforcing native plant law. “I’m not badge-happy, though,” says McGinnis, whose relaxed demeanor and motorcycle-wheeling ways make him an unlikely Wyatt Earp of native plants. He protects everything from barrel cactuses to ocotillos to livestock, but his primary concern is saguaros.

It’s not illegal to uproot saguaros, but it requires permits, fees and tags, which oppor-

tunists ignore and crooks concoct elaborate schemes to avoid. The Sonoran icons can fetch \$40-\$75 per foot on the black market, and often get sold to homeowners who think they’re a steal. And they are.

McGinnis also cracks down on vandals who hack at saguaros with machetes, shoot them full of arrows and blast them with shotguns. “If it’s not going to live, I’ll fine them based on the value of the cactus — \$55 per foot,” McGinnis says. “If it’s a 20-footer, that’s a felony.”

Sadly, McGinnis is fighting an uphill battle. In 2001, six full-time cactus cops patrolled the state, holding stakeouts into the night. After budget cuts, just two remain.

“I get a call almost every day,” McGinnis says, “but I only get out three times a month.” Dividing his time between protecting livestock, selling permits and administrative duties, he filed only 19 cactus cases in 2006. Out of how many? “More than I care to think,” he sighs. “They could be stealing 100 a day and I’d never know.”

McGinnis has spoken to media outlets worldwide trying to stir up concern for the native plant program, which receives money only from the sale of tags and permits. He’s lobbied to put the native plant fund onto the list of programs people can donate to when they file their taxes. The move could garner \$60,000 to \$200,000 a year, enough to hire a few more investigators. Unfortunately, it was rejected — because it wouldn’t fit on the front side of the tax form.

McGinnis remains determined. “I like the whole concept of protecting something that’s been associated with Arizona since as long as I can remember,” he says. “It’s a noble cause.”

— Keridwen Cornelius

CELEBRITY Q & A



Conor Jackson

First Baseman,
Arizona Diamondbacks
by Dave Pratt

AH: If you were trying to convince Derek Jeter or any of the other Yankees that Arizona is one of the most beautiful places in America, where would you take them?

C: Greer. People think Arizona is just a desert, and Greer is definitely one of the most beautiful places in the state. You just don’t expect to see so much green in Arizona.

AH: When you go hiking in Arizona, what’s the one thing — other than water — that you always carry in your backpack?

C: Sunscreen.

AH: If you were making a solo road trip to Sedona, which would you choose: a Harley or a Mustang convertible?

C: I’d go with the Harley, because ... well, it’s a Harley, and there’s nothing better than a Harley.

AH: What’s your favorite place in Arizona?

C: Chase Field.

AH: If you had been put in charge of designing the new “Arizona” quarter, what would you have put on it?

C: The Arizona Diamondbacks’ “A” logo.

AH: What three words best describe Arizona?

C: Hot, hot, hot! Just kidding ... entertaining, charismatic, vivacious!

— Dave Pratt is the host of the “Dave Pratt in the Morning” show on KMLE 107.9 FM in Phoenix.

RESTAURANTS

Eggs Come First

Even during lunch, omelets rule the roost at Zeke’s Eatin’ Place in Prescott. If you’re on a diet, you’re in trouble. These things are huge.

REMEMBER BACK IN JANUARY, when you made that resolution to eat healthy and lose some weight? If you’re like most Americans, you didn’t make it past the Super Bowl. And that’s OK. In fact, as long as you’ve blown it, you might as well head to Zeke’s Eatin’ Place and really fall off the wagon.

If you’ve never been to Zeke’s, a small diner just off State Route 69 in Prescott, the motto is this: “No one goes away hungry.” After one meal, you’ll know they’re serious.

Bob Williams owns the restaurant with his wife, Tracey, who was the inspiration for the diner’s Western theme. “She’s a country girl deep down,” Williams says. “We just expanded on that.”

Among other things, cow skulls and framed images of John Wayne adorn the walls. There’s something almost intimidating about having the Duke look down at you while you’re eating. It’s as if he’s saying, “You’d better clean your plate, pilgrim.”

In addition to the Old West, there’s a history lesson as well. Old photos of Prescott, dating back to the early 1900s, are scattered under clear glass covering the tabletops. Small flyers advertising local businesses accompany the photos.

Of course, the food is the main attraction at Zeke’s, where the hearty meals are geared more toward Hoss than Little Joe. “We’re a man’s man’s place,” Williams says with a laugh. “We’re meat and potatoes. It’s in-your-face type food.”

What most people put in their face is breakfast. Even during the lunch hour, Williams says, most people order breakfast, with omelets being the most popular items. These aren’t ordinary omelets, though. The nearly foot-long monsters, which include anywhere from five to seven eggs, span an entire plate and are served with a towering pile of crispy hash browns and a choice of toast, pancakes, or biscuits and gravy.

The basic pancakes are about 7 inches in diameter. If you’re

more adventurous, try the wagon-wheel pancakes, which are roughly the size of hubcaps. Although it’s not on the menu, Zeke’s even has a pancake challenge.

“If you can eat three pancakes in 20 minutes or less, we buy your meal and give you a T-shirt,” Williams says. “We make a spectacle of it, but only about 15 people have ever done it. It’s just funny to see their faces when the pancakes come out.”

Breakfast is served until 2 p.m., but Zeke’s also has a lunch menu available beginning at 9:30 a.m. The menu features soups, salads, sandwiches and “midday meals from the chuck wagon.” Like breakfast, the lunch portions are huge.

Try the Southwest turkey melt. It’s a real knife-and-forker, thanks to the red chile mayo that covers the oven-roasted turkey, green chiles, pepper jack cheese and bacon piled high on sourdough bread.

As a side dish, you’ll have to choose between fries or a salad. Although the healthy voice in the back of your head will be whispering “salad,” if you’re going to fall off the wagon anyway, you might as well fall hard and go for the crisp, expertly seasoned fries. Once you’ve tried them, you’ll resolve to go back and try them again.

■ Zeke’s is located at 1781 E. Highway 69 in Prescott. For more information, call 928-776-4602 or visit zekeseatinplace.com.

— Hilary Peele



GEORGE GOURLEY

Teresa Smith, Zeke’s Eatin’ Place



PAULA JANSEN

LODGING

Rooms With a View

Not only is it situated in one of the most beautiful places in the world, the food at Garland's is every bit as impressive as the surrounding landscape.

WITH THE POSSIBLE EXCEPTION OF EL TOVAR, which has the unfair advantage of being perched on the edge of the world's seventh natural wonder, Garland's Oak Creek Lodge is arguably the most scenic place to spend a night in Arizona. Lodge, hotel, B&B, campsite . . . good luck finding accommodations with a better view.

Located in the heart of Oak Creek Canyon, about 8 miles north of Sedona, Garland's is surrounded by millions of years of red-rock geology, towering pines, hearty oaks and a healthy dose of pioneer history. Like most of the canyon, the Garland property was homesteaded in the 1800s — the first structure, now the kitchen, was built in 1908. It wasn't until the 1920s, however, that the lodge really started to take shape. That's when the Todd family began building cabins to accommodate guests from Flagstaff and miners from Jerome, who came to fish in Oak Creek.

In 1972, Bill and Georgiana Garland, longtime friends of the Todds, bought the lodge and started laying the groundwork for what would become one of the most spectacular overnight stays in the Southwest. In addition to the rocks and the trees and the birds in the sky, there's the creek, for which the canyon is named. The hikes along the water are wonderful, and the fishing is even better — fly fishermen have been known to make day trips from as far away as Fountain Hills. The pools of the creek are stocked with rainbow trout from May through September, and native brown trout are present

as well. It's not surprising, then, that trout shows up regularly on Garland's menu, which is every bit as impressive as the surrounding landscape.

The emphasis on food dates back to Georgiana, who contributed a slew of old family recipes. Today, that dedication is carried on by Amanda Stine, Garland's resident chef for the past 25 years. Recently, Stine and Mary Garland coauthored *Sharing the Table at Garland's Lodge*, a critically acclaimed cookbook that features more than 275 of the lodge's recipes, some of which you'll get to sample firsthand.

As if the surroundings aren't enough, a stay at the lodge also includes afternoon tea, an elegant dinner and a hearty breakfast, which is cooked to order. The breakfast menu changes daily, and the dinner menu includes things like tomatillo bisque, mixed greens with spicy slaw and pumpkin seeds in a cumin-lime vinaigrette, and grilled Alaskan king salmon with mango Serrano salsa.

After a meal like that, you might expect the sleeping quarters to be a little anticlimactic, but they're not. Among other things, the large cabins at the lodge come with wood-burning fireplaces, and the small creekside cabins feature porches overlooking Oak Creek. Other than a room perched on the edge of the Grand Canyon, it doesn't get any better than this.

■ *Garland's is open April 1 through November 15, and is located on State Route 89A, 8 miles north of Sedona. For more information, call 928-282-3343 or visit garlandslodge.com.* — Robert Stieve

PHOTOGRAPHY

Heeeeere's Johnny

When it comes to sports photographers, former ASU student John McDonough is one of the best. Just ask *Sports Illustrated*.

"HOW DO I BECOME A WORKING PHOTOGRAPHER, and where do I get started?" I get asked that a lot. Turns out, there are as many answers as there are professional photographers. Here's how John did it. Not John Doe, but John W. McDonough, one of the premier staff photographers at *Sports Illustrated*.

If you're not familiar with his name, you know his work. For more than 25 years, "Johnny Mac's" photography has graced the pages of *SI* (including 70-some covers), each one depicting his vision, dedication and talent. From Super Bowls and Final Fours to the Olympics and the World Series, he's lived a sports shooter's dream. And it all began here in Arizona. Sort of.

John was in his 20s with a newly inked degree in English literature from Indiana's De Paw University when he wrangled a summer job as a sports writer/editor at a local newspaper in Indiana. It's not unusual for writers at smaller publications to photograph their own stories, and that's what forced John to pick up a camera for the first time.

His start, however, was a little rough. On his first assignment, he loaded the company-issued camera incorrectly. The result? No photos. Hoping to keep his job, he started checking out a camera on weekends to practice his skills, shooting everything from landscapes to peewee football games, and then having the film processed. After one of those weekend outings, a photo-lab tech invited him into the darkroom to discuss one of his images. That's what ignited his lifelong passion — when he saw that first black-and-white print magically appear in the developing tray, McDonough knew that photography was his calling.

From Indiana, McDonough followed Mitzi, his then-girlfriend and now wife, to Arizona and applied to a number of college photography programs. He eventually connected with Con Keyes at Arizona State University. Keyes was instrumental in guiding the photojournalism careers of many of his students. John was no exception. From those classes came an opportunity to shoot occasional assignments for *The Arizona Republic*. Eventually, McDonough was offered a staff position at the state's largest paper. He worked long hours, and



JOHN W. McDONOUGH / SPORTS ILLUSTRATED

Sports Illustrated Photographer John McDonough made this image of LeBron James using a 300 mm lens and available light. Setting his ISO to 1600, his exposure was 1/1000 sec. at f-2.8.

his reputation as a sports shooter and a meticulous technician began to grow.

With the encouragement of established photographers, McDonough traveled to New York to show his portfolio to editors at *Time* and *Sports Illustrated*. By that point, he was ready to move on, and he relocated to Los Angeles, where he freelanced for the *Los Angeles Times*, *Sport* and *Sports Illustrated*.

Despite his success, John still has as much passion for making photographs as the hungriest rookie, and he believes the power of the still image is alive and significant. He takes it seriously. For example, when he shoots an NBA game, he uses up to 10 digital cameras, all placed in various locations throughout the arena, where each one can be triggered remotely from his baseline position on the floor. Backboards, catwalks, low angles and high, McDonough has embraced technology. And he's made it work with his personal style and vision.

Long ago he realized that it's critical to be open and receptive, which in turn allows him to work and keep his "photographic mistress." As Joseph Campbell said, "If you follow your bliss, you put yourself on a kind of track that has been there all the while, waiting for you and the one that you ought to be living."

— Jeff Kida, Photo Editor

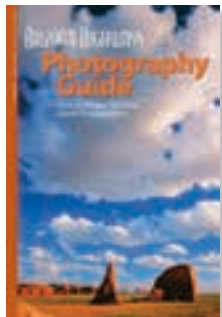


PHOTO TIP

Follow the Focus

Whether you're shooting scenics, sports or wildlife, here are some tips from longtime professional John McDonough. New cameras are getting better all the time. If you're in the market, look for something that will allow you to shoot in a variety

of situations. Highly recommended are digital single-lens reflex cameras (dSLR) for their interchangeable lenses and shorter shutter delay. In addition to that, the image quality using higher ISOs with the larger dSLR sensors has never been better. If you decide to shoot moving subjects, practice and

learn to follow the action. Rather than reacting, work on anticipating what will happen next. As you become more confident, begin to crop your images in the camera's viewfinder.

EDITOR'S NOTE: Look for *Arizona Highways Photography Guide* and other award-winning books at arizonahighways.com.

online For more photography tips and information, visit arizonahighways.com and click on "Photography."



HISTORY

Photo Opportunity

They started with nothing, but the Kolb brothers would eventually make photographic history at the Grand Canyon.

TO BE THE PREMIER photographers and moviemakers of the Grand Canyon in the early 1900s, you needed the artistic eye of Ansel Adams, the business mind of Bill Gates, the heart of Sir Edmund Hillary, the guts of Evel Knievel and the legs of Lance Armstrong. In other words, you needed to be Ellsworth and Emery Kolb.

In 1900, 25-year-old Ellsworth Kolb journeyed west from Pittsburgh to see the world “with \$2 in his jeans,” recalled brother Emery. He found a job at Grand Canyon Village and invited Emery to join him. Soon, the Kolbs bought a photography shop in Williams, paying the \$425 sum in installments.

On weekends, the brothers photographed tourists at the Canyon’s Bright Angel trailhead — without the benefit of a studio, running water or even shelter. Their darkroom was a dusty prospecting hole covered by a ratty blanket. They rinsed glass

plate negatives in muddy cow pond water hauled from 11 miles away. They slept on the cold, hard ground.

Conditions improved — slightly — when the Kolbs constructed a studio perched on the Canyon rim, and a darkroom at Indian Garden halfway down the Canyon.

Thus began a daily marathon. After photographing mule parties below the trailhead, the brothers sprinted 300 feet back up to their studio to make proofs. Then they dashed 4.5 miles into the Canyon to meet the mule party at Indian Garden and took orders for prints. Barely catching their breath, they huffed 3,360 vertical feet back to the studio in time to deliver the pictures. Sometimes, they ran that round-trip three times a day.

With the invention of the motion-picture camera, Ellsworth and Emery seized an opportunity for fame. In 1911 they set off in two boats



Ellsworth and Emery Kolb

COURTESY NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIVERSITY, CLINE LIBRARY

to run the Green and Colorado rivers from Wyoming to Mexico to shoot the first motion-picture film of the Grand Canyon. Back then, the undammed rivers were deadly, and the Kolbs capsized countless times, narrowly escaping drowning. Through snow flurries, near-starvation, and rain and sandstorms that wreaked havoc on their equipment, the brothers’ determination never wavered.

They finally succeeded, their movie launching a sensation as Emery lectured to crowds around the coun-

try. Ellsworth wrote a book, and *National Geographic* devoted an issue to the accomplishment.

Eventually, their partnership split up, but Emery continued his love affair with the Canyon, working at the studio until his death in 1976, at the age of 95. You can still visit the studio, which houses art exhibits, a bookstore and a tribute to the Kolb brothers and the 3.5 million Grand Canyon tourists they photographed.

■ Information: 800-858-2808 or grandcanyon.org

— Keridwen Cornelius

THIS MONTH IN HISTORY

- On May 20, 1937, Amelia Earhart began the first leg of her mysterious last flight after taking off from Oakland, California. The first stop for the famous “Lady Lindy” and her Lockheed Electra was in Arizona at the Tucson Municipal Airport.
- On May 24, 1869, Major John Wesley Powell began his epic journey down the Green and Colorado rivers for his exploration of the Grand Canyon.
- On May 30, 1899, Pearl Hart became the first (and last) woman to rob a stagecoach. Hart and Joe Boot held up the Globe stage, making off with \$450 and a revolver. A few days later, the couple was captured in the hills surrounding Globe.

NATURE

These Bugs Stink

Insects aren’t as interesting as coatimundis and cougars. Still, milkweed bugs are kind of cool. Stinky, but cool.

THE USERY MOUNTAINS near Phoenix seem to be all grays, pale browns and dull greens this late spring day, and so I’m surprised when I see a few small dots of brilliant color gleaming from the lower branches of a desert tree. Curious, I take a closer look at what proves to be a congregation of orange-red milkweed bugs. The insects have gathered on the seedpods of a vine that’s crept into the lower branches of a paloverde. Appropriately, the large milkweeds have chosen to perch on a climbing milkweed vine.

To inspect the bugs, I carefully lift a seedpod, which looks a lot like those of the desert milkweed. While inspecting the seedpod, I realize that it reeks. I hastily drop the pod and then wash my hands with water from my canteen, but I won’t escape the nauseating scent of the milkweed until I can scrub up with soap.

Anything that smells as bad as climbing milkweed must be poisonous, and, in fact, the milky sap of many members of the milkweed family contains deadly cardiac glycosides. These toxic and bitter compounds are used to treat people with congestive heart failure, but they’re strictly off limits for the rest of us because the glycosides damage healthy hearts.

Of course, milkweeds don’t make cardiac glycosides to poi-



JOHN ALCOCK

son (or cure) humans. They engage in chemical warfare to repel plant-eating animals. The plant’s dreadful smell and poisons, however, haven’t fazed the milkweed bugs. That’s because of these insects’ special digestive system. Its enzymes not only permit the bug to feed safely on milkweeds, but also sequester the plant’s poisons. Eventually, the unaltered glycosides are moved from the gut to a thin flat sac right below the surface of the thorax and abdomen. Should a bird grab and squeeze the bug, the epidermal compartment breaks, spilling its foul contents into the mouth of the predator.

So it makes sense that the bright-red milkweed bugs hardly bother to move when approached. They instinctively know they’re safe from attack. It also makes sense that the bugs are attracted to each other by the strong odors they release; the more that gather together, the more conspicuous a warning they offer to those birds that might otherwise be tempted to sample a milkweed-bug hors d’oeuvre. Should one bug fall to a naive predator, the other bugs nearby will surely be left alone by the newly educated bird.

— John Alcock

nature factoid

TOXIC TOADS

It’s said that you have to kiss a lot of toads to find a prince, but stay away from the Sonoran Desert toad, also called the Colorado River toad. These large toads secrete a milky-white venom from glands located behind their eyes. The powerful poison protects the toads from potential predators by acting as a hallucinogen — and that’s no fairy tale.



BRUCE TAUBERT

50
years ago
in arizona highways

Arizona Highways has always touted the beauty of Eastern Arizona — 1958 was no exception. Among other things, our May 1958 issue featured spectacular photographs of the lakes, rivers and meadows of the White Mountains. Fifty years later, the area is still one of the best places to spend your summer vacation.





THINGS TO DO

Cinco de Mayo



JEFF KIDA

THE IRISH HAVE St. Patty's Day and fools have April 1, but any self-respecting Arizonan waits for the month of May to really kick it up during the state's favorite celebration, Cinco de Mayo. Festivities honoring Mexico's defeat of the French army at the battle of Puebla on May 5, 1862, take place around the state. From Chandler's Chihuahua races to a Tucson 10K, Arizonans take Cinco de Mayo seriously. For a comprehensive listing of statewide celebrations, visit arizonahighways.com.

may 5

the Journal



JEFF KIDA

SPRING IS HERE

Holy Trinity Monastery is the setting for Fiesta de la Primavera in the Southern Arizona town of St. David. Celebrate spring in the high desert on May 10-11 with more than 150 booths featuring arts, crafts and food. There's also entertainment, and the monastery grounds house an art gallery, museum, library and bird sanctuary trail.

■ Information: 520-720-4642 or holyltrinitymonastery.org/index.html.

may 10-11



WE'VE GOT JACK

Discover the beauty of the Grand Canyon through the eyes of Pulitzer Prize-winning photographer Jack Dykinga. This month, Dykinga discusses his new book, *Images: Jack Dykinga's Grand Canyon*, during a free lecture series sponsored by the Grand Canyon Association. Published by *Arizona Highways*, the book features 80 photographs

may 14-15 & 18

made from 35 different viewpoints around the Canyon. During his presentation, Dykinga shares his experiences in photographing the area, as well as his insight on the Canyon's most beautiful locations. The lectures take place at Northern Arizona University's Cline Library, May 14, 7 p.m.; the Glendale Public Library, May 15, 7 p.m.; and Prescott's Sharlot Hall Museum, May 18, 1 p.m. ■ Information: 800-858-2808 ext. 7036 or grandcanyon.org.



DESERT CABALLEROS WESTERN MUSEUM

Where the Boys Aren't

MAY 3-4 IS THE LAST WEEKEND to "Cowgirl Up" at Wickenburg's Desert Caballeros Western Museum. The West's best women artists (57 in all) show their work during one of the country's most prestigious female artist exhibitions. Nearly 200 pieces of Western paintings, drawings, ceramics and sculptures are on display and for sale.

■ Information: 928-684-2272 or westernmuseum.org.

may 3-4

PHOTOGRAPHY WORKSHOPS

Join Friends of Arizona Highways and PhotoShop expert Steve Burger October 24-27 during the height of fall color in Sedona. Learn how to use image-editing programs to enhance your photographs. ■ Information: 888-790-7042 or friendsofhighways.com.



DAVID H. SMITH

Rendezvous in Williams

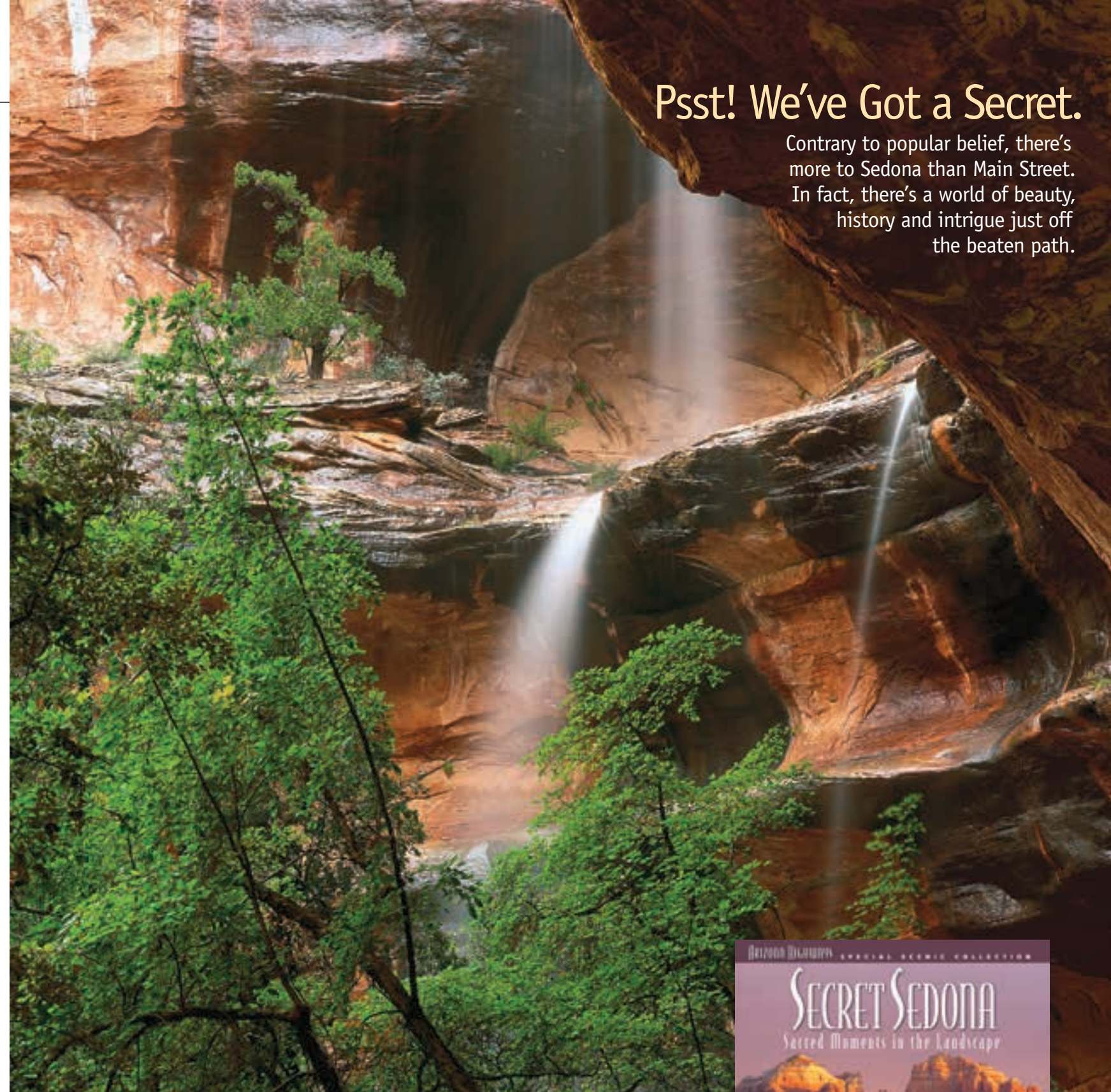
He's not as famous as Daniel Boone, but Arizona's most renowned mountain man, Bill Williams, is the inspiration behind Rendezvous Days, his namesake town's annual event. Now in its 29th year, this Memorial Day weekend event kicks off with a Western-themed parade, when the Bill Williams Mountain Men ride horseback dressed in 19th-century buckskins. Rounding out the weekend are a carnival, barbecue, historic walking tours, mountain-men displays and a rodeo. And at night, the Cataract Creek Gang invades Main Street with a cowboy shootout.

■ Information: 800-863-0546 or williamschamber.com. **AR**

may 24-25

Psst! We've Got a Secret.

Contrary to popular belief, there's more to Sedona than Main Street. In fact, there's a world of beauty, history and intrigue just off the beaten path.

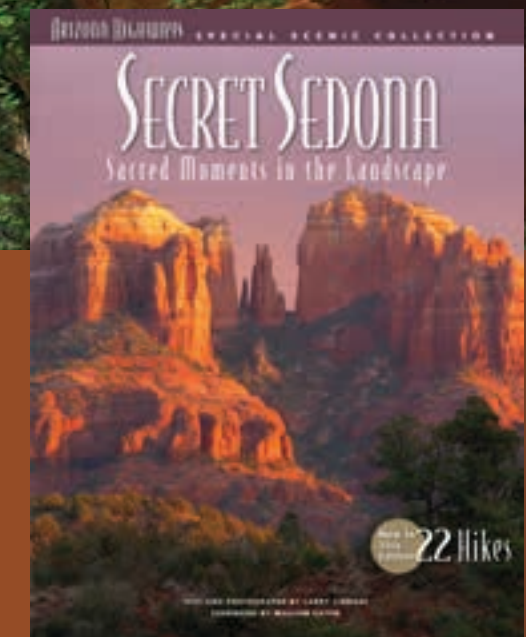


Larry Lindahl

An Insider's Guide

Our newest book, *Secret Sedona: Sacred Moments in the Landscape*, features the spectacular photography and personal observations of longtime Sedona resident Larry Lindahl. Plus, Larry shares more than 20 of his favorite hikes in red-rock country.

Order now and save 15% off the retail price of \$12.95. Visit arizonahighways.com or call 800-543-5432.



Offer expires May 31, 2008. Use promo code 585 and item code #ACRS4. Shipping and handling not included. You can also visit our retail location at 2039 W. Lewis Avenue in Phoenix.

ARIZONA HIGHWAYS

Sedona

>side trips>

Here's the thing about Sedona: All you have to do is drive through to be blown away. That's not advisable, though. There are too many opportunities off the beaten path. Hiking, biking, fishing, fine dining ... these are just some of the reasons to park the car. BY KELLY KRAMER

SUNSET BOULEVARD After an adventurous day, find a perch like Airport Mesa (also a vortex) and watch the sunset tint Steamboat Rock and Coffee Pot Rock paprika red. Photograph by Nick Berezenko
■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



Sedona is spirit country. At least to the thousands of people who visit each year to explore the vortexes of Boynton Canyon and local buttes, as well as the area's countless Native American spiritual landmarks. But it's also a great place from which to launch excursions of a more terrestrial nature — whether of the hiking, biking, fishing or dining variety. There's no limit to the number of adventures that Red Rock Country has to offer, so pack a bag and hit the road. Sedona's waiting.

Tube Time

[SEDONA ADVENTURE OUTFITTERS & GUIDES]

OAK CREEK HAS LONG BEEN KNOWN for its water adventures, from fishing and kayaking to skimming without a boat down Slide Rock. But thanks to Sedona Adventure Outfitters & Guides, the creek's pristine waters have also become a popular destination for tubing, a lazy-day sport to top all lazy-day sports. Pick up a posse of tubes at the company's boathouse, along with safety gear (life jackets and helmets) and water cannons, and venture to one of four sites the adventure outfitters recommend for some of the best tubing: Slide Rock State Park, Grasshopper Point, Red Rock Crossing or Mormon Crossing. Although there aren't any rapids along the creek, you'll find a few spots where the current picks up a bit, and pools deep enough for swimming and lounging, so be prepared with sunscreen, hats, water and snacks.

The boathouse is located at 2020 Contractors Road in Sedona. For more information: 928-204-6440, 877-673-3661 or sedonatubing.com.

Pink Jeep Tours



BOB & SUZANNE CLEMENZ



BOB & SUZANNE CLEMENZ

Sedona Bike & Bean

Bikes & Beans

[SEDONA BIKE & BEAN]

WEEKEND ADVENTURERS are known for their dine-and-dash mentality — not in the juvenile thievery connotation of the phrase, but rather in the grab-a-bite-and-get-on-the-road sense of it. That's what makes Sedona Bike & Bean so great. Here you can rent a mountain bike for exploring Sedona's countless trails (see *Along for the Ride*, page 30), and grab a latte for the road at the store's nine-seat coffee counter. Many bike tours, including some along the trails near Bell Rock just outside the Bike & Bean's windows, depart from the shop. They're led by 360 Adventures (360-adventures.com), an Arizona-based outfit that also offers rock-climbing, hiking and backpacking excursions. Full-suspension bicycles rent for \$50 per day.

Sedona Bike & Bean is located at 6020 Highway 179 in Sedona. For more information: 928-284-0210 or bike-bean.com.

Think Pink

[PINK JEEP TOURS]

THAT FLASH OF PINK darting across your hiking trail isn't a new species of desert animal, but an entirely distinct variety of Arizona adventure. For more than 45 years, the folks at Pink Jeep Tours have trekked countless families across the desert in their famous, bright-pink, open-air Jeeps. The craze began when local developer Don Pratt took potential clients on tours to scope out real-estate opportunities. Broken Arrow Estates was one of Pratt's 13 area developments, and today, the Broken Arrow tour is one of the company's most popular. The two-hour scenic drive rumbles over red rocks and into canyons, resting at Chicken Point and Submarine Rock. Other tours explore 700-year-old Sinagua cliff dwellings and Chimney Rock, Lizard Head and other named rocks.

The Pink Jeep Tours office is located at 204 N. Highway 89A in Sedona. For more information: 800-873-3662 or pinkjeep.com.



LARRY LINDAHL



Devil's Bridge



L'Auberge Restaurant on Oak Creek

GEOFF GOURLEY

Hit The Trail [moderate]

[DEVIL'S BRIDGE TRAIL]

JUST OUTSIDE OF civilization, the nearly 2-mile round-trip Devil's Bridge Trail is the perfect trek for hikers who haven't yet broken in their boots. Sufficiently challenging but not at all grueling, the trail begins at 4,600 feet and gradually increases to an elevation of right around 5,000 feet, traversing juniper-strewn washes. About three-quarters of a mile from the trailhead, the path opens up to a stunning view of the bridge, the largest sandstone arch in the Sedona area. Vibrant red and patinated with green moss, the 50-foot arch is wide enough to walk across but tall enough that it would hurt to fall, so exercise caution. Whether you choose to take the topside trail — which follows a natural rock staircase — or not, be sure to pack your camera. Here is some of the area's most beautiful scenery, particularly when skies are sunny.

Devil's Bridge Trail begins 12 miles west of Sedona, off unpaved Forest Service Road 152. For more information: 928-282-4119 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino.

Hit The Trail [expert]

[A.B. YOUNG TRAIL]

THERE'S A LOT TO LIKE about A.B. Young Trail. The first likable thing has to do with the fact that the trail starts at the Bootlegger Campground, and, as far as we're concerned, there's no finer name for a campground. The second plus is

that the strenuous 2.4-mile hike into the wilderness around Oak Creek Canyon leads to a stand of ponderosa pines that might just take your breath away. That is, of course, if the 1,600-foot ascent over 1.5 miles doesn't do it first. C.S. "Bear" Howard constructed the trail in the 1880s, but its namesake, A.B. Young, supervised its revitalization by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the 1930s. Today, the trail is a favorite among dyed-in-the-wool hikers, who love its views of Oak Creek Canyon and unique rock formations.

A.B. Young Trail begins approximately 10 miles north of Sedona off State Route 89A, at Bootlegger Campground. For more information: 928-282-4119 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino.

Bird's-Eye View

[ARIZONA HELICOPTER ADVENTURES]

IF YOU'VE HAD ENOUGH of exploring Sedona's trails by foot, Arizona Helicopter Adventures offers plenty of opportunities to get a bird's-eye view of some of the city's famous scenery. The company offers its Red Rock Roundup — including Cathedral Rock, Bell Rock, Courthouse Butte, the Chapel of the Holy Cross, Snoopy Rock and Submarine Rock — and Ancient Ruins tour of Boynton Canyon and the Mogollon Rim, from the perspective of a Bell Jet Ranger helicopter. The "Sedona Deluxe" package combines the best of both tours. During your flight, the pilot provides a narrative history of the area, along with answers to your toughest questions. Most tours are short, ranging from 13 to 35 minutes, but a few pack-

ages combine air and Jeep tours with picnics for two-hour excursions.

Arizona Helicopter Adventures launches from the Sedona Airport, on Air Terminal Drive, in Sedona. For more information: 928-282-0904, 800-282-5141 or azheli.com.

An Edible Experience

[L'AUBERGE RESTAURANT ON OAK CREEK]

IT TAKES A LOT OF FUEL to power through a lengthy bike ride or a strenuous hike, which is why it makes sense to dine at L'Auberge Restaurant on Oak Creek. Whether you decide to visit for breakfast, lunch or dinner, rest assured your meal will be served with a hearty side dish of gorgeous scenery. Located on 11 acres in the Coconino National Forest, the inn is known for its magnificent view of Oak Creek and the surrounding red rocks. But each dish that comes out of L'Auberge's kitchen is equally stunning. The fare combines contemporary American cuisine with classic French influences, from the acclaimed apricot brioche cristo stuffed with prosciutto and served with blueberry compote and Chantilly cream to Dijon-crusted Colorado lamb chops.

L'Auberge Restaurant on Oak Creek is located at L'Auberge de Sedona, 301 L'Auberge Lane, in Sedona. For more information: 800-905-5745 or lauberge.com.

Crystal Persuasion

[CENTER FOR THE NEW AGE]

SEDONA IS HOME TO SIX VORTEXES, believed by many to be hubs of spiritual energy (see *A Force to Be Reckoned With?*, page 36). And at Center for the New Age, located at the exact geographical center of the city, spiritual guides can help visitors harness their own spiritual energy through guided vortex tours, chakra-balancing and aura-cleansing. The center's psychics and spiritualists also lead reservation-only seminars and "circles" like the recent "Psychic Message Circle" and "Past Life Regression" series or opportunities to connect spiritually with your pets. For those interested in superficially tapping their sacred selves, tarot card and palm readings are a regular occurrence at the center, and a friendly staff can help guide them through countless books, crystals and reports available for purchase.

Center for the New Age is located across from Tlaquepaque Arts & Crafts Village on State Route 179. For more information: 928-282-2085, 888-881-6651 or sedonanewagecenter.com.

Something Fishy

[THE HOOK UP OUTFITTERS & GUIDE SERVICE]

FROM OAK CREEK CANYON to the less-visited Beaver Creek, Marshall Lake and Verde River, the area presents ample fly-fishing opportunities. And the water, typically calm and clear, is perfect for the beginner angler looking to get hooked. Join The Hook Up Outfitters & Guide Service for its Sedona Red Rock Trout Adventure. During half-day or full-day excursions, an expert fisherman gives simple instruction as he guides you to the area's most populous fish districts. And The Hook Up hooks you up with Orvis gear, from rods, reels and lines to waders and boots. Even though catch-and-release fishing



LARRY LINDAHL

The Crystal Grotto at Mii Amo Spa


is standard practice, you'll head home with something better than a 10-pound trout — vivid memories of wide-open spaces, views of the San Francisco Peaks and the cool satisfaction of getting your feet wet in one of Arizona's precious waterways.

For more information: thehookupoutfitters.com or 623-412-3474, 888-899-4665.

Deep Breathing

[MII AMO SPA, ENCHANTMENT RESORT]

NESTLED IN THE HEART of Boynton Canyon, the Enchantment Resort is Sedona's premier hotel. The resort pays homage to the area's Native American heritage, and its spa, Mii Amo, does the same. Named in honor of the Yuman word for journey, Mii Amo's spa menu emphasizes both spirituality and serenity, with treatments such as the Mii Amo Spirit experience. During this 60-minute session, spa-goers are treated to a "sage clearing," for which they state an intention: health, abundance or another similar sentiment. Next, a spa technician anoints the body's chakras to help restore energy flow and positive thinking. Most treatments are infused with the same spiritual sensitivity, but there are a few standard offerings, as well, like deep tissue massages and signature facials.

Mii Amo is located at the Enchantment Resort, 525 Boynton Canyon Road, in Sedona. For more information: 888-749-2137 or miiamo.com. 

Kelly Kramer is a Phoenix-based writer and a regular contributor to Arizona Highways. In addition to eating cheeseburgers and cupcakes, she loves fly-fishing on Oak Creek. Although she's more than capable of cleaning her own fish, she usually leaves that to her husband, Nick.

DROMEDARY DOMINANCE

The red rocks of the Camel Head formation tower over junipers, piñon pines and Arizona cypress in Marg's Draw in the Munds Mountain Wilderness just minutes southeast of Sedona. Photograph by Elias Butler

■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.

A P O R T F O L I O

Seeing Red

The double-decker buses in London, the square in Moscow, the Coke can, Bonnie Raitt's hair, the little girl who was chased by the Big, Bad Wolf ... a lot of icons in this world are red, but few can compare to the rocks in Sedona. In this month's portfolio, we'll give you a better look at Arizona's second natural wonder.

If you think you've seen Sedona, think again.



PERCOLATING PRECIPITATION

Drought-resistant and hardy, a piñon pine tree clings to its red-rock toehold while a rainbow from a passing shower arcs down the “spout” of Coffee Pot Rock.

Photograph by Larry Lindahl

■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.



JUNE BLOOMS

Versatile soap tree yuccas (above) — traditionally used by Indians for soap, food and basket-weaving materials — bloom in early summer near Courthouse Butte.

Photograph by Robert McDonald

MORNING MIST

Following a winter storm, early morning mist lifts near Coffee Pot Rock (right), shredding at the promise of a clear, blue sky. Photograph by Larry Lindahl

■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1



HIGH DRAMA
With Wagnerian intensity, billowing clouds cast shadows on Cathedral Rock (center, right) and its environs in this view from Red Rock Loop Road. Photograph by Bob & Suzanne Clemenz

■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1.





GET A GRIP
Alder, oak and fir trees (above) survive on narrow ledges on the slick-rock canyon walls of the West Fork of Oak Creek near its source in the Red Rock-Secret Mountain Wilderness. Photograph by Robert McDonald

IS THAT A BRACT?
Actually a tiny yellow flower surrounded by rose-colored bracts, owl clover — known in Spanish as *escobita*, or “little broom” — carpets a meadow near Red Canyon west of Sedona. Photograph by Robert McDonald
■ To order a print of this photograph, see page 1. **AH**

ALONG FOR THE RIDE

Sedona is a mountain-biking mecca — one of the best in the world. For some hard-core riders, it even outranks Moab. Although our writer leans more toward timid, we sent her out anyway. With a group of extremists, nonetheless. **BY LORI K. BAKER** **PHOTOGRAPHS BY TOM BEAN**



DIFFERENT SPOKES Move over, Moab. Sedona offers at least as much scenery as that mountain-biking mecca in a more manageable package. Backdropped by Cathedral Rock, cyclist Saori Watanabe coasts the popular Templeton Trail.



Susan Amon, a mountain-biking guide, waved us on.

I was linked up with a group of experienced mountain bikers on Sedona's Templeton Trail, where high red-rock ledges flaunt panoramas of the spires of Cathedral Rock and Munds Mountain Wilderness, and jut out over deep green valleys mated with piñon pines and shaggy junipers. Instead of pedaling ahead, I lurched to a stop, kicking up a tiny fantail of red dust and braking before a vast expanse of buffed Creamsicle-colored sandstone, frighteningly called slick-rock.

On my left were boulders and prickly pear cactuses bearing purple fruit and beavertail pads with spines like barbed wire. On my right was a 50-foot sheer drop-off that could be an accidental high-dive for a "Fred" like me. In mountain-biking lingo, a Fred is someone who's decked out in all the right gear — in my case, brand-new black Lycra shorts, a spandex shirt, helmet and gloves — and still can't ride on anything rockier or steeper than a flat slab of asphalt.

Suited up, I felt confident and cocky. But that fraudulent feeling evaporated the second I eyed the ledge. I held my breath as I grimly imagined plummeting for a few eternal seconds, my tinny cries too weak to echo off the rugged cliffs of Munds Mountain, and then disappearing into a puff of flesh, bone and mangled bike metal like Wile E. Coyote in a *Roadrunner* cartoon.

I thought about all that I'd leave behind — a husband who still didn't know how to boil an egg, a teenaged son who'd just begun driving and dating, an overfed Sumo wrestler cat named Oreo and all those deadlines. Then I remembered my fellow mountain bikers' strict "no rider left behind" policy. And how I couldn't dial 911 for emergency air-evac services for high anxiety. That's when I took a deep breath, stared straight ahead and started pedaling madly over the slick-rock.

Hardcore bikers love this slick, eroded rock — their bikes' fat rubber tires cling to it like a cockroach on a tenement ceiling. The wonder of slick-rock is that it can help you defy gravity and

keep you heading up steep slopes like Spiderman.

Somehow I didn't fall or go "endo" — a term that's short for end-over-end, a slapstick maneuver of flying over the handlebars unexpectedly. I owe that to Sedona MTB Adventures' other tour guide, Andy Reinert, a calm and reassuring 40-year-old extreme snowboarder who'd braved snowdrifts in Alaska for eight years before catching Red Rock Fever and moving to Sedona. He patiently taught me that skilled mountain biking is actually counterintuitive: "When you go slower, the bike tends to be more unstable. Speed is your friend," he said. "And if you look at a rock or a cactus, you'll hit it. Always keep your eyes on where you *want* to go."

That's the irony of mountain biking in Sedona, which has killer views — literally — if you can't resist the urge to sightsee in the saddle. Here, spectacular clay-red sphinxlike formations — Bell Rock, Courthouse Butte, Capitol Butte and Cathedral Rock — burst 500 to 2,000 feet out of the green valley floor and



change color and character as the sun crosses the cobalt-blue sky overhead. Layers of limestone and sandstone strata of buff, orange and salmon hues speak of millions of years in geologic time — the Supai group, the Hermit formation and the Schnebly Hill formation. Each has withstood the eroding forces of water, ice and windblown particles in a different way, creating mesmerizing formations, some with whimsical names like Rabbit Ears and Snoopy Rock.

Mountain bikers from all over the world come to Sedona for these up-close-and-personal views of Red Rock Country,

PEDAL PUSHERS Darlene Ryan and Peter Rosenthal cycle the Bell Rock Pathway (opposite page) in the Coconino National Forest, with Courthouse Butte presiding over the trail.

SLICK-ROCK SINGLETRACK Andy Reinert, Saori Watanabe and Aaron Lisco (back to front) test their mettle on the Templeton Trail (above, right), a mostly flat stretch with technical descents at the end.



... one of the greatest spiritual lessons mountain biking can teach you is letting go of fear. “It unlocks the child within, that joy and freedom ...”

along with more miles of single-track (rough, narrow paths no wider than a bike) than its mountain-biking rival, Moab, Utah. “Sedona is way better than Moab,” says Aaron Lisco, a 34-year-old mountain biker from Hawaii who’d just spent the last three months pedaling across six Western states with his girlfriend. “It has everything Moab has in a tight little package — and there aren’t as many Freds.”

In Sedona, an arterial network of more than 100 miles of mountain-bike trails begins at Bell Rock Pathway, a 3.5-mile trek where novice riders on rental bikes can feel safe on the wide paths and gently sloping red gravel winding past Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte. Experienced riders can move quickly on to explore the many loops, fingers and forks of more challenging single-tracks like the Llama Trail, where Bell Rock and Courthouse Butte tower overhead, and other time-whittled monoliths — Cathedral Rock, Thumb Butte, Twin Buttes and the giant stone varmint, Rabbit Ears — loom in the distance.

Other classic rides include Broken Arrow, a 3-mile jaunt with a stop at the Devil’s Dining Room — a landmark sinkhole protected by a fence — and views of Submarine Rock, Twin Buttes and gorgeous red spires. Another favorite, Little Horse Trail, takes mountain bikers past the base of the ruddy rocks of Twin Buttes to a landmark appropriately called Chicken Point, a slick-rock saddle between two red buttes.

I vowed to return to Sedona to test-drive more of its trails — after I’d mastered a few more mountain-biking maneuvers on the terra firma of my neighborhood park.

Until then, sipping a latte at Bike & Bean, the local mountain-biking hangout, sounded like my kind of afternoon. I set up an appointment with Cosmic Ray, a 61-year-old mountain-biking guru and the author of *Fat Tire Tales and Trails: Arizona Mountain Bike Trail Guide* (Gem Guides Book Co., April 2004). I wanted to learn the secrets of the mountain-biking culture in Sedona from a man who’d been into the sport since the late 1970s, when riders drove “crazy junkyard bikes” assembled from parts of old motorcycles and paper boys’ bicycles. (Today, top-of-the-line mountain bikes sell for more than \$4,000.)

Inside Bike & Bean, a combination bike shop and coffee bar in the Village of Oak Creek, the air smelled of rubber tires and steamed milk. A bike mechanic named Gonzo clicked through gears, trued wheels, traced trail routes ... and whipped up lattes, cappuccinos and iced mochas. With a slight limp, I sidled up to the bar sided with corrugated tin, rested my scraped-up elbows on the concrete countertop and ordered the house special, a “superphatmojolate.”

Before long, Cosmic Ray zoomed into Bike & Bean’s parking lot on his BMW motorcycle. Wearing a white polo shirt with the insignia, “Take risks. Go fast,” he thrust out his hand and

introduced himself. First off, I had to know how he got the nickname Cosmic Ray, and fully expected to hear yet another New Age yarn knitted into the folklore of Sedona, official home of energy vortexes and a harmonic convergence. “Well, my name isn’t as interesting as it sounds,” he admitted, explaining that it dated back to when he owned Cosmic Cycles, a bike shop in Flagstaff.

We then talked books. In his witty and whimsical guide, Cosmic Ray ranks Arizona’s mountain-biking trails as easy, moderate and difficult. He warns that some are extreme — a “possible bloodbath.” I flipped to the back of his guide, a glossary of mountain-biking lingo.

“You’ve got to tell me a few words I can toss around so I won’t sound like a total Fred.” Pointing to my skinned elbow, he read, “Bacon: scabby trail jerky, road rash.” He went on, “You can use some of these terms casually in a conversation, like a ‘mutant,’ someone who is crazy about mountain biking — they’re twisted and bent. Oh, and look out for the ‘HOHs’: hateful old hikers.”

I thought back on the day’s mishaps, including when I nearly had a “yard sale,” a big wreck that scatters your stuff everywhere. Of course, there were exhilarating moments, too, like the sense of sailing free and unencumbered down an easy downward slope of Bell Rock Pathway. And then there was the 51-year-old extreme mountain biker who told me that one of the greatest spiritual lessons mountain biking can teach you is letting go of fear. “It unlocks the child within, that joy and freedom,” he said. “It’s a powerful thing.”

No wonder I felt so reluctant to harness myself into the driver’s seat of a Toyota for a two-hour commute back home to Mesa. I’d discovered that life’s journeys are more exhilarating if you’re not what mountain bikers call a “cager” — a person trapped in a car. ■

Freelance writer and editor Lori K. Baker really brought home the “bacon” (mountain-biking lingo for road rash, or scabby arms and legs) after this assignment. She lives in Mesa.

Tom Bean of Flagstaff prefers to photograph natural landscapes with a human presence as a way to entice others into enjoying the outdoors. He has photographed people hiking, backpacking, swimming, birding, llama trekking, and now mountain biking in the fabulous red-rock country. But he says it’ll be a long time before he tries mountain biking with 30 pounds of camera gear and a tripod on his back again.



WHEEL IN THE SKY Darlene Ryan’s wheel frames Courthouse Butte (left) while she catches her breath on the Bell Rock Pathway, a 3.5-mile trail linking Oak Creek Village with Sedona.

PREHISTORIC PEDALER? The tip jar at the Bike & Bean (right) in Oak Creek Village features a “bikopelli” design, a visual play on the ubiquitous art depicting the deity Kokopelli.



A **FORCE** TO BE RECKONED WITH?

EVEN IN **SEDONA**, IT'S HARD TO GET A STRAIGHT ANSWER ON WHAT A **VORTEX** IS. HOWEVER, MOST **NEW AGE** DISCIPLES WILL TELL YOU IT'S A PLACE WITH INCREASED **ENERGY** THAT **AMPLIFIES** WHATEVER YOU TAKE INTO IT. THAT'S WHAT THEY SAY. IS THERE SOMETHING TO IT, OR ARE THESE PEOPLE JUST **NUTS**?

BY JACKIE DISHNER

YOU WOULDN'T CALL US NEW AGE. But there we were, my boyfriend and I, surrounded by a background of red rocks and bright-green manzanitas, having our aura photos taken, getting our chakras cleansed, and even meditating with a yogi. Why? I wanted to learn about the famed vortexes in Sedona.

If it hadn't been for four simple words and a question mark — *WHAT IS A VORTEX?* — on the cover of a thin guidebook, we might not have thought to do this. Both of us had been to Sedona many times, and even though we were well aware of the fascination with the vortex concept, it had never been ours ... until I saw that book.

It wasn't even Larry Lindahl's red and blue photograph of Cathedral Rock — considered the most photographed vortex in Sedona — on the cover that attracted me. It was those four words and the question mark. I didn't know the answer, and I thought it was time to find out.

So, I called Dennis Andres, the book's author, and asked if he'd be our guide. We spoke for an hour about vortexes, and Sedona in general, and I mentioned that I wasn't sure I understood the energy force. I wasn't even sure if I believed in it. Before we hung up, he told me to remember one thing: "It's OK to be skeptical. Just don't be cynical."

We wound up experiencing the area's six known vortex sites — Airport Mesa, Bell Rock, Boynton Canyon, Cathedral Rock, Chapel of the Holy Cross and Schnebly Hill Road — each hidden within the vast reaches of what's become known as the "New Age Capital of the World." In between hikes, we scheduled a few

massages, the necessary meals at several restaurants, chakra cleansings, energy balancing and time for those aura-reflecting snapshots — all of which was intended to help open the heart, mind and soul to the spiritual nature of the journey.

If it sounds ambitious, it was. Memorable, too. This was the trip that taught me to see with my eyes closed.

Representatives at Sedona's visitors center will tell you the city has earned a reputation as a spiritual mecca because of its vortexes. This "global power spot" regularly draws healers, intuitives, artists and spiritual guides. We met several of them during our weekend tour. One woman, who goes only by the name Sheila, told us the reason she settled in Sedona was because of a bird. As she drove into town, she said, "I felt as though I'd been transformed into an eagle soaring over the red rocks." To her, the message was clear: Stay put. So she did. She now serves sandwiches at Dahl & DiLuca's Aroma on State Route 179.

"Is the energy magnetic?" I wanted to know.

"No, not really," Andres answered. "There's no scientific evidence to fully support that theory."

According to Andres' definition, a vortex is a place in nature

POT O' GOLD A rainbow arches over Sedona's Cathedral Rock (left), the location of what is said to be one of the area's most significant vortexes. Photograph by Bob & Suzanne Clemenz

ROCK ART Fashioned by hikers, a rock design (right) resembling a medicine wheel sits trailside in Sedona's famous red dirt. Photograph by Larry Lindahl





where the Earth is exceptionally alive and healthy, its natural beauty reflected in the elements of land, light, air and water. Additionally, he believes a vortex is a place on the planet with increased energy that magnifies or amplifies whatever you bring into it. Because no one experiences a vortex in quite the same way as someone else, defining a vortex becomes an individual lesson and rests with how well you trust your own intuition.

So, the believers urge visitors to take the Jeep tour, sign up for an outdoor yoga hike, and — to find out how much and what type of energy your body emits — have your aura photo taken at the vortex of your choice. The photo will reveal a blurry ring of colors around your head, neck and shoulders. They say the farther out the ring extends, the more connected you are to your true self.

We began our journey in Andres' four-wheel-drive SUV on Schnebly Hill Road to Cow Pie Trail. As the SUV rocked up and

down over the rugged dirt terrain and around sharp curves — its wheels spinning too close for comfort along the cliff's edge — we spotted at least a dozen touring Jeeps of various colors — pink, turquoise, red, green. From a distance, they looked like a blooming floral bouquet.

Andres has been giving private tours as “Mr. Sedona” for more than 10 years. Taking couples, singles and groups to vortex sites, he uses guided imagery to help them connect with the energy field he says you won't be able to see with your eyes open.

There's nothing there, he admits. There's no “swirling ball

SECRET SPACES Framed by the walls of a small side canyon, Secret Mountain (above) dominates the horizon in Boynton Canyon. Photograph by Larry Lindahl

TAKE A HIKE A hiker follows a Boynton Canyon trail (opposite page) beneath towering red-rock cliffs. Photograph by Larry Lindahl

of energy” to see, as some people claim.

“People were getting confused, even angry, because they'd hear so many different answers about the vortex,” he explained on our tour. “I'd often hear, ‘I just want to know what it is.’”

The problem is, there's no specific spot where you can go, he says. There's no “X” on the map. No road signs. And when you get there, “you never know what's going to happen, because men and women respond differently,” he says.

I can attest to that. Just a day earlier, we were flying over the red rocks, getting the bird's-eye view by helicopter of Cathedral Rock up ahead, when Ralph Gannarelli, the not-as-funny-as-he-thinks pilot for Maverick Helicopters, said to his five passengers: “Look ahead! There's a vortex. Sometimes you feel nothing, but other times ...”

Drop!

I felt a huge bump in the cabin, and heard myself scream as Bruce Hornsby sang, “... That's just the way it is,” in the background.

“A lot of people say they get a feeling of euphoria or lightheadedness when they get inside these vortexes,” Gannarelli said. “They might even feel dizzy. I had one woman who said she felt centered. How are you feeling, Jackie?”

So much for his tip, I was thinking, as I said, “I wouldn't call it centered.”

I preferred to experience the vortex from the ground, the way Mr. Sedona offered — through

guided imagery, rather than forced fear.

Back on that rough road, we pulled over to a trailhead on Munds Mountain — a rusty-red surface coated with basalt rock patches. Two hours into the hike on Cow Pie Trail, we stopped at a clearing about the size of a football field, and found some boulders to sit on near the edge of a cliff.

Sedona seemed to spread her layered manganese, sandstone and iron arms out wide to welcome us. We could see for miles. To my right stood Mitten Ridge, the Mogollon Rim and Marg's Draw. On the left, we could see Airport Mesa, downtown Sedona and Teapot Rock. Patches of pale-green, blue and white lichen beamed up from the face of the boulders where we sat.

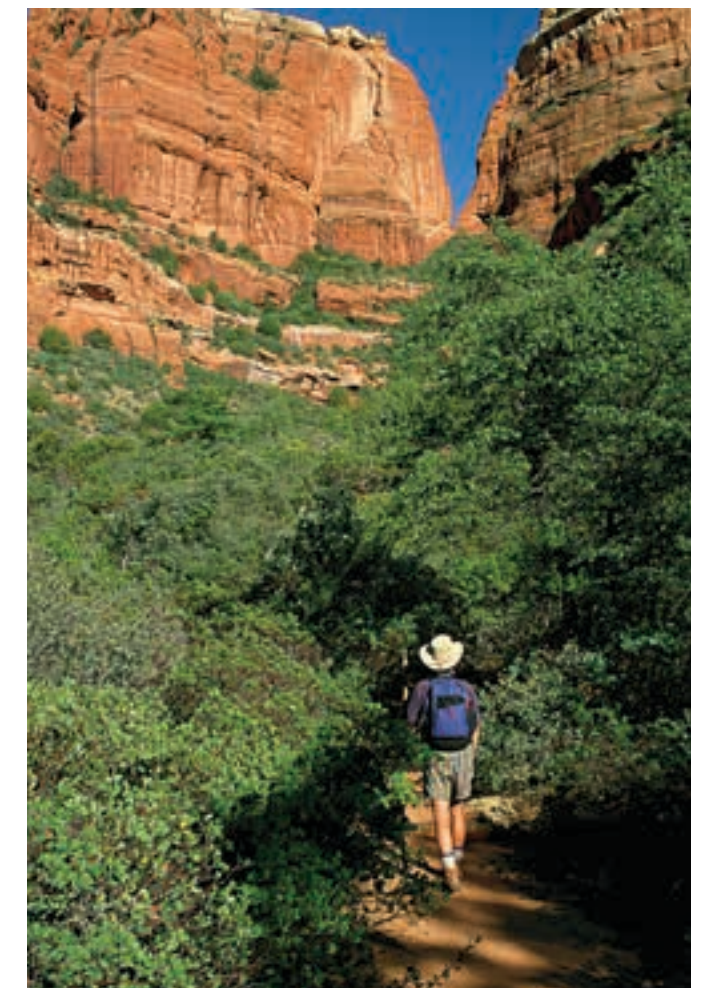
“Imagine 56,000 visitors in Sedona, and not one of them, other than us, are on this plateau,” Andres said. It was just us and a lone swallow playing in the wind — its occasional calls the only sounds.

For the next few minutes we sat and watched the stillness, and Andres slowly guided us into our own imaginations. In mine, I saw myself flying like the swallow, down into the canyon, soaring just like Sheila's eagle, and then coming back up to the edge of the cliff. Fifteen minutes later, I heard the swallow call out again, and I opened my eyes to see more vibrant colors on the canyon walls. That pale-green lichen looked more like lime-green. Even the swallow, which I thought had been all black, showed his white-tipped wings.

At the end of the weekend, Johanna Maheshvari Mosca, our yoga instructor from Sedona Spirit Yoga & Hiking, took us to the top of Cathedral Rock for some breathing exercises, and offered the best take-home lesson: “What's here are the steps as we take them, the blue sky, your smile, your breathing,” she said. “It's about being present in the moment. In a community intent on spiritual growth, you can't help but become a part of it.”

And, according to Andres, a core idea of New Age thinking involves establishing a more balanced relationship with the planet. If that means spending more time in Sedona, then maybe I'm a little more New Age than I thought. **AH**

Jackie Dishner is a Phoenix-based writer who plans to return to Sedona as often as possible. Although the vortex might not have claimed her as a resident, it's claimed her as a visitor.



when you go

Location: Sedona, 115 miles north of Phoenix.

Information: Dennis Andres, 928-204-2201 or sedonaprivateguides.com; Maverick Helicopters, 888-261-4414 or arizonahelicopteradventure.com; Sedona Spirit Yoga & Hiking, 888-282-9901, 928-282-9900 or yogalife.net.



Although New Age gets most of the attention in Sedona, there's an Old Age that's worth learning about, too. The people are known as Sinagua, and their ancient cliff dwellings are just a dirt road away.

PREHISTORY LESSON

TO THE WEST OF SEDONA lies a maze of red-walled canyons and sandstone spires seemingly holding up the weight of a solid blue sky. It's a land of lost mountains and secret canyons. If you have any doubt, pull out the map. It shows you where to find Lost Mountain, and plots each contour of Secret Canyon. But even with a map in hand, an air of mystery remains.

Where paved roads turn to dirt you'll find traces of people who managed to thrive centuries ago in the dry uplands. They left behind stone walls embedded in cliffsides and archaic images painted in the shelter of overhanging cliffs. Two of the best-preserved sites are the remarkable cliff houses of Honanki and nearby Palatki.

ANCIENT IMPRINT The fingerprints of the original architects are still visible in the mud plaster of certain prehistoric structures of the Loy Canyon Sinagua Ruin. Centuries ago, intruders might have been deterred by this defensive wall that sits high above the Loy Canyon Trail in the Coconino National Forest.

BY SCOTT THYBONY
PHOTOGRAPHS BY LARRY LINDAHL

COCONINO NATIONAL FOREST ARCHAEOLOGIST Peter Pilles leads an eager throng to the Honanki site at the base of Loy Butte. The group follows the trail into an alcove. Their leader wears a trim, gray beard and a faded Smokey the Bear cap sporting the words “Only You.” At its peak, the cliff dwelling contained more than 70 rooms, he explains, and points out a section that might have been four stories high. Keeping an eye out for Jake the Snake, a rather docile rattlesnake who occasionally greets visitors, the group continues to an area where the rooms caught fire, forcing the Sinaguans, the original architects, to rebuild.

Honanki contains a warren of rooms last occupied by Pueblo Indians 700 years ago. Well-laid masonry, built without trowel or level, merges with the sandstone cliffs lifting from the juniper flats below. Archaeologists call the prehistoric people who first lived here the Sinagua — a term of convenience because we don’t know what they called themselves. We can only imagine what joys and tragedies permeated their lives, but enough of their former home remains to connect us with their intriguing past.

A ruin stirs the imagination. At Honanki Heritage Site, a lone raven perches on an ancient wall rising from the rubble. The bird stands silent watch over a place once filled with the voices of children playing, the barking of dogs and the chopping sounds of stone axes on wood.

“There’s a very strong connection between the people who were here before and us,” says Forest Service volunteer Ron Krug. “If you listen real hard, you can hear them.”

Ron acquired his interest in the past as a kid hunting arrowheads, and it resurfaced when he retired to Sedona. He began volunteering to record, and sometimes excavate, the profusion of ancient sites found in the region.

Site hosts at Honanki, provided by Pink Jeep Tours, greet 35,000 visitors each year. Because of the increase in foot traffic, the Forest Service began a multiyear project to improve trails, document rock art and conduct limited excavations. Volunteers have helped to stabilize the standing walls, some of which still bear the original mud plaster. If you look closely, the fingerprints of the prehistoric masons are visible today.

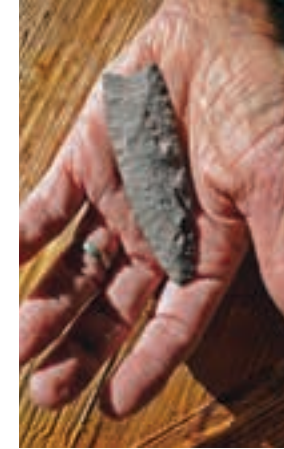
Pilles explains that the cliff dwelling was the center of a wider community extending far beyond a single site. “We focus on the core sites like Honanki,” he says, “but we need to focus on people.”

Below the ruins a dirt road continues to the home of Roger and Ellie Daisley. They first visited Honanki 10 years ago while searching for a ranch to buy. “A raven kept flying back and forth as we were leaving,” Ellie recalls. “‘What’s down this road?’ I asked Roger.

“‘The map says it’s a dead-end.’”

“‘We have to follow it.’ The raven flew up the road and landed on a ‘For Sale’ sign. We looked at the buttes, saw the beauty and said, ‘Home!’”

As the most recent occupants of a place where the timeline reaches back long before the cliff dwellers, the Daisleys’ connection to the past is direct and often tactile. Inside their house, Roger sits holding a fluted spear point in his open hand. More than 12,000 years ago, at the end of the last ice age when mammoths grazed below the red-rock cliffs, a hunter passed this way. All he left behind was an unbroken Clovis point, finely worked from black rhyolite, thought to have come from a source north of Seligman.



BURIED TREASURE Roger Daisley holds a Clovis point (above) fashioned from black rhyolite.

WARRIOR WHEEL Pictographs (left) such as this Sinagua painting of an 18-inch shield offer keys to decoding the past.

SACRED SIGHT Palatki Ruin (below, left), Hopi for “Red House,” takes on a hue true to its name in the light of the setting sun.

Steve Strauss, a neighbor of the Daisleys, found the artifact while digging a basement. The backhoe hit bedrock about 10 feet down, and the last scoop of dirt uncovered the spear point. Ellie sent photos of it to Pilles, who checked the site without turning up additional Clovis points. “I keep waiting to find that mammoth tusk sticking up from the ground,” she says.

Early travelers passing through red-rock country often noted the ancient cliff dwellings and speculated on their origins. Must have been the Aztecs, some thought, or perhaps the Lost Tribes of Israel. It was left to the archaeologists to sort things out.

With shovel in hand, Jesse Walter Fewkes probed Honanki and Palatki in 1895. The Smithsonian scientist gave the cliff houses Hopi Indian names, since he was searching for evidence linking the sites to Hopi traditions. Honanki means “Badger House” and Palatki translates as “Red House.” Certain Hopi clans, and the local Yavapai people, claim an ancestral link to the ancient inhabitants and a spiritual connection to many of the sites. For the Yavapai, the red-rock landscape of Sedona represents the middle of the world — and their home.

THE SOUTHERN SINAGUA PEOPLE appeared in the Verde Valley around A.D. 650, and a northern branch settled near the San Francisco Peaks. As farmers, they depended on the rains and winter snows. In the south, the Sinagua reached their peak between A.D. 1150 and 1250, before the climate grew drier. By the end of the 13th century, some of the local people left their cliff homes in search of water, and joined the larger pueblos we now call Tuzigoot and Montezuma Castle, both built near permanent watercourses.

Pilles believes others might have remained in the area and dispersed into family groups. This was during a period when the Yavapai Indians, who lived by hunting and gathering wild

when you go

Location: Honanki Heritage Site and Palatki Heritage Site, off Forest Service Road 525, accessed 5 miles west of uptown Sedona.

Travel Advisory: Reservations are required to visit Palatki. Call 928-282-3855. A Red Rock Pass is required to park on national forest land in the Sedona area.

Warning: Forest Service Road 525 is a graded dirt road. Check road conditions with a ranger before traveling it during or after wet weather.

Information: 928-252-4119 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino.

plants, began moving into the valley. “The upland Sinagua,” Pilles says, “had a lot in common with the Yavapai, and some probably adopted the Yavapai lifestyle.”

While the Sedona region is not true desert, archaeological deposits are dry enough to preserve centuries-old cotton fabrics. Cotton played a key role in the Sinagua trade network, and farmers probably grew it locally. Using upright looms, they wove such items as blankets, kilts and bags in intricate open-work patterns, creating some of the finest textiles in the prehistoric Southwest.

The fabrics stand the test of time, as one local discovery proves. When volunteer John Sturgis, who has worked on many archaeological projects around Sedona, was helping to stabilize a room at Honanki, the crew uncovered pieces of a cotton tunic and leggings. “It was exciting to find,” he recalls, “and it got more exciting a couple of days later. We were out at Hopi [Reservation] for one of the ceremonials, and the people were wearing the same things we’d found. They wore almost exactly what we had excavated from deposits 800 years old!”

Six miles by road from Honanki stand the remains of Palatki, tucked into a sandstone amphitheater of Red Canyon. Here, the deep colors of rock and sky appear to have been trowled on thickly from a painter’s palette.

One trail leads to the dramatic cliff dwelling and the other climbs to The Grotto, a recessed ledge sunk deep in the shadows. As your eyes adjust to the grainy light, images of horned animals, human forms and stylized snakes appear on the back wall. Rendered in red, white and yellow, these pictographs date back thousands of years and give us a glimpse into the ancient artists’ imaginations.

Interpreting rock art has proved extremely difficult, even for the experts, but some enthusiasts can’t resist. “People get really nervous when you can’t tell them what it means,” Palatki Heritage Site volunteer Bonnie Bower says, adding, “I get nervous when they start telling me what it means.”

A connection with the past doesn’t depend on decoding the rock art. When photographer Larry Lindahl was exploring a nearby canyon below Secret Mountain, he spotted a hidden ruin. He climbed to the site and found an unusual pictograph on the wall, a circular maze design painted in white.

“There below it,” he said, “was the sandstone slab used to mix the paint. The white pigment was smeared back and forth with an arcing motion, where the artist was grinding the pigment with his fingers. It bridged the gap between now and 800 years ago. I sensed the presence of the artist who was there with his wet paint. It was definitely a time-travel moment.”

A longing to experience the past leads some to replicate it and others to channel it. But at certain moments, the hard facts of a standing wall or a simple swirl of paint are enough. Out in the red-rock canyons, the flow of time can eddy back on itself, letting the past brush against the present. ■



Rock Art Road Trip

Located on the South Rim, this scenic route offers vintage Arizona scenery and a dose of art history.

“IT LOOKS LIKE AN ELK to me,” says Bob Blasi, a fire-prevention officer for Kaibab National Forest. I agree. The brown and orange animal, with its tail pointed jauntily in the air, does resemble an elk with large antlers. My husband, Richard, is more dubious. “Why is it so fat with such short legs?” he asks. Who knows? Maybe it just ate too much.

We’re not scrutinizing one of the stately elk that wander this terrain near the South Rim of the Grand Canyon, but a 12-inch-high pictograph, an ancient painting on rock. At some time, someone, for some reason, chose to record animal figures on the wall of Rain Tank Wash near Tusayan. We walk from one image to another like three

art critics at a swanky gallery. Brown and orange seem to be the artists’ colors of choice, along with a few red paintings to add variety.

These enigmatic depictions are “displayed” on limestone overhangs along the wash. Although dry now, the arroyo begins as a spring, one of only a handful on the South Rim, and develops into the main

tributary off the Tusayan Plateau. Blasi has taken us to where the ravine deepens into a small canyon.

A trail leads along the canyon bottom, bordered by ponderosa and piñon pines, sage, and junipers that soften the stark Kaibab limestone walls. On both sides, small overhangs formed where the underlying limestone eroded away.

SUN GODS Sunset outlines rock formations of Brahma Temple and Zoroaster Temple (above), named after the Hindu creator god and the Persian prophet of Zoroastrianism, respectively.

A moderate, short climb up the right side of the gully leads to a shallow cave where we immediately spot the “elk” figure. Deer, snake, mountain sheep and elk images are identifiable, but we can only guess at the meaning of a 20-inch brown oval outlined in orange. I think it’s a shield. Blasi guesses a turtle. Richard just shrugs.

This is the lure of rock art. When, why, or by whom were these figures made? Kaibab Forest archaeologist John A. Hanson identifies the early Native American culture in the area as the Cohonina, who resided there from about A.D. 700 to 1150. Were these images made by the Cohonina? It’s possible, but there’s no proof. Anasazi, or even an earlier culture, might have left their marks, but experts generally agree that the figures are at least 1,000 years old. Here, at the Rain Tank Wash site, we find more of the fragile pictographs (painted designs) than the durable petroglyphs (pecked into stone). Other painted images probably existed, but the natural flaking off of rock has destroyed them.

Natural weathering isn’t the only thing damaging the symbols. Unfortunately, much rock art is lost to human ignorance. Someone has



used chalk to outline a snake figure, and spots of modern red paint dot the wall. Oil from hands can also damage the images, and the rock flakes off very easily.

This obviously was a well-used location, as smoke smudges the overhang’s ceiling, rock art lines the walls, and metates or grinding stones are worn into large boulders. There are no signs

THE DAILY GRIND This overhang (above) in Rain Tank Wash served as a “kitchen” where prehistoric women ground grains and seeds in limestone mortars called metates.

GOT ELK? Experts believe this elk-like pictograph (below) in the Rain Tank Wash near Tusayan is at least 1,000 years old. But who painted it, and why does it resemble the portly animal figures in France’s Lascaux cave? Nobody knows.





HOUSE OF THE RISING SUN

Banana yucca plants soak up rays from the rising sun, which provides dramatic backlight to Vishnu Temple in the Grand Canyon.

of stone foundations, so this was probably a rock shelter used for short stays. Maybe someone painted the figures while sitting out a rainstorm or enjoying a few days in the cool pines.

Wandering along the outcropping, I notice faint petroglyphs etched into the stone. Orderly sheep figures march behind an elk, and a 2-foot centipede-like creature decorates the ceiling.

In the center of the site I spot something unique. Two sheep petroglyphs are chipped atop pictographs. It seems the pictographs were painted before the petroglyphs were added. No one knows the age of either set of images — there's no reliable way to date rock art. Archaeologists usually try to estimate the date from pottery and nearby ruins, but this isn't an exact science.

Farther down the canyon, sage emits its pungent smell. The raucous calls of Steller's jays warn that we're invading their territory. We scramble up slopes looking for pictographs and find a red circle, perhaps a sun, with rays fringing it. A design once decorated the center, but it's been obliterated by six bullet holes. Damage like this makes some people argue that all rock art

travel tips

Vehicle Requirements: High-clearance.

Warning: Back-road travel can be hazardous. Be aware of weather and road conditions. Carry plenty of water. Don't travel alone, and let someone know where you're going and when you plan to return.

Additional Information: Kaibab National Forest, 928-638-2443.

511 Travelers in Arizona can visit az511.gov or dial 511 to get information on road closures, construction, delays, weather and more.



ALL ABOARD The Grand Canyon Railway travels between Williams and the Grand Canyon's South Rim every day. For information, visit thetrain.com.

route finder

Note: Mileages are approximate.

- **From Williams, head north** on State Route 64 approximately 50 miles to Forest Service Road 347.
- **Turn left (west)** and go 6 miles to Forest Service Road 306. If you cross the Grand Canyon Railway tracks, you've gone about .25 miles too far.
- **Turn right (north)** onto FR 306 and continue 1.25 miles to Forest Service Road 2615.
- **Turn left onto FR 2615** and drive 5 miles until the road is blocked by large rock piles. Warning: This dirt road becomes treacherous during and following rain.
- **Park here and hike** a quarter-mile to a half-mile to limestone overhangs on left. Faint footpaths lead to the hunting-shelter/pictograph area. Look closely to find pictographs; they are not marked by any signage.



should be off limits to the public.

We could spend the rest of the day in Rain Tank Wash just enjoying the scenery and searching for rock art, but we're getting hungry and decide to backtrack on the Forest Service roads that brought us here and head north on State Route 64 to explore the hamlet (population 562) of Tusayan. Five miles from Grand Canyon National Park's South Entrance, this small-town gateway to the "rim of the world" offers several local eateries. We find specialty coffees, Internet access and a gift shop at Happy Trails Tusayan, American cuisine and homemade pies at Café Tusayan, Mexican and Southwestern fare at Canyon Star Tusayan, and Italian at We Cook Pizza and Pasta Tusayan. Now we have to choose.

■ For more back-road adventures, pick up a copy of our new book, *The Back Roads*. Now in its fifth edition, the book (\$19.95) features 40 of the state's most scenic drives. To order a copy, call 800-543-5432 or visit arizonahighways.com. **AH**

The Dogie Trail

It's a wilderness area now, but back in the day, cowboys pushed cattle along this spectacular trail in Sycamore Canyon.

IT'S IMPORTANT TO KNOW that I can't sing. At ball-games, I lip-sync the national anthem. Around candlelit cakes, I hum *Happy Birthday*. I steer clear of karaoke bars, *American Idol* auditions or anywhere my tuneless wailing could wilt human ears. So, when I say I belted out a few numbers along the Dogie Trail in Sycamore Canyon, you'll grasp the sense of isolation engulfing this rugged Verde Valley wilderness.

According to the trail registry, only two people had hiked the Dogie during the previous month. I signed in, already with a song on my lips, and scanned the skyline stacked with the familiar sandstone drama of nearby Oak Creek Canyon. Less crowded Sycamore Canyon offers the same crimson-and-cream-colored cliffs and crumpled buttes, punctuated with terraces of piñon pines and junipers.

The trail carves a corridor through a scratchy tangle of manzanitas and shrub oaks as it descends into the canyon. Not overly steep, the rockiness of the trail requires attention during this segment. Along a ridgeline north, I spotted a favorite formation. It appears first as an exposed slab, but as I continued, a keyhole of light flickered in the lower corner. I kept walking as it widened to a "window," and then a long slice of sky emerged. Only from that

vantage point could I detect the separate column standing like an upraised arm waving goodbye. You won't see it listed on maps, but it's "adios rock" to me.

Cowboys once pushed cattle herds from the Verde Valley to Flagstaff through Sycamore Canyon. Traces of that era remain, notably the stock tanks. The trail side-swipes the most prominent of these about 2 miles in. Even the name is a holdover — dogie is "cowboy" for a motherless calf. It's a perfect description for this trail, evoking an orphaned sense of loneliness.

After passing the tank, the trail parallels Sycamore Creek for the last 3 miles. This section of canyon creates an illusionary oasis. The Dogie dips in and out of drainages, many displaying torrent-sculpted pouroffs dropping to the creek bed. Cottonwoods and willows line the banks, but despite those implications, water remains almost as scarce as visitors.

Still, hiking in on the heels of recent rains, I kept an eye peeled for lingering pools to experience that sheer, sweet joy of finding moisture where none normally exists — it's a desert-dweller thing.

I crossed the rocky band of the creek, then clambered onto the shaded shelf guarding the west bank. From there, the Dogie ends a half-mile beyond, at the junction



with the Sycamore Basin Trail. That's when I caught a startling gleam.

Sun skipped across a deep pool sheltered by drooping cottonwoods, and I knew immediately where I was stopping. I had jerky in my backpack, a Little Feat song in my head, and it was time to break out both, which I did. The moral of the story? The next time you're hiking

SANDSTONE SOLITUDE Sedona's Dogie Trail in the Sycamore Canyon Wilderness offers magnificent views of sandstone ramparts (above) a quarter-mile west of the wilderness boundary gate. A slice of sky sneaks through adjoining pillars of a red-rock butte (right) as piñon pine and juniper trees adorn the jagged cliffs below.

Sycamore Canyon and hear a javelina with the hiccups, it's probably just me singing. Feel free to harmonize. **AH**

trail guide

Length: 10.8 miles round-trip.

Elevation Gain: 1,000 feet.

Difficulty: Moderate to strenuous.

Payoff: Seclusion, red-rock views and wildlife.

Location: About 50 miles south of Flagstaff (14 miles west of Sedona) on paved and graveled roads.

Getting There: From Sedona, drive southwest 5 miles on State Route 89A. Turn north onto Forest Service Road 525 and follow the signs to Sycamore Pass. Turn west onto Forest Service Road 525C and continue for 9 miles to the parking area. The last half-mile might require a high-clearance vehicle.

Travel Advisory: Spring and autumn are the best times to visit. No motorized or mechanized vehicles (including bicycles) are allowed in Sycamore Canyon Wilderness.

Warning: The canyon floor can be very hot during summer months. Always carry plenty of water, at least 1 gallon per day per person.

Information: 928-282-4119 or www.fs.fed.us/r3/coconino.

